

Statement from the Boulder City Council in support of maintaining a welcoming and inclusive environment for all races and ethnicities during the COVID crisis

Our City has been working closely with local, state and federal officials to monitor and maintain community health and safety in response to the outbreak of COVID-19. Today we join the City of Denver and Mayor Hancock in addressing related and unsettling human rights concerns.

Over 650 incidents of verbal harassment, verbal shunning and physical assault against members of the Asian American community have been reported in the last month throughout our nation. We can assume that the actual number is much higher. Xenophobia all too often proliferates during times of great duress and history shows that Boulder is not immune. Indeed, we are hearing from non-Asian, non-white members of our community who are also experiencing increasing acts of bigotry and discrimination.

Stigma and discrimination against certain groups of people may be the anxious result of a need to blame others as we struggle to cope with our fears. Blame, however, breeds a dangerous contagion of more fear and anger. None of us are in complete control of our destiny, and this epidemic highlights the uncertainty of our lives' course.

This pandemic, this virus, with its indiscriminate power, reminds us that, at our core, we are all the same, and are all connected in our experience. Color, ethnicity, language, nationality do not matter at all in this moment. Fear is a natural result of uncertainty. Uncertainty is also a partner of hope. Let us choose hope over fear.

This is why we, the City Council of Boulder, Colorado are asking you, our entire community, to help counter these behaviors by learning and sharing the facts as we know them. Toward this end, we remind everyone of the city's dedicated COVID-19 webpage that we should all familiarize ourselves with. The webpage is updated daily and contains information, resources and services to help us through this crisis. Go to bouldercolorado.gov/coronavirus for links to information and channels for assistance and community in this trying time.

Our community has long taken actions in the form of resolutions and ordinances that reflect our commitment to protect the health, safety, dignity and human rights of all members of our community and of working to create an equitable and socially just place for all regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender or immigration status. These commitments are even more important now in the face of xenophobia inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic..

We want to hear from you about incidents of discrimination that may be motivated by biases against a person's race, color, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or gender identity. Toward that end, the City has launched a portal on the Racial Equity webpage to collect information on these incidents as you learn of them. Please report findings on this portal: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/racial-equity>, or contact the city's Office of Human Rights at 303-441-4197.

We are committed to putting the full weight of our city government behind prosecuting all violations to our Human Rights ordinances within our jurisdiction.

This pandemic has revealed our mutual dependencies and our desperate need to work together. We will pull through this, but only with compassion, concern for others and commitment to our mutual well-being. Boulder is no stranger to hard times. We are a resilient community that not only bounces back but also bounces forward.

We are all in this together.